

**MINUTES**  
**BROWN COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY**  
**PROJECT BASED VOUCHER ADVISORY SUB-COMMITTEE**  
**Friday, May 18, 2018, 4:15 PM**  
**City Hall, 100 N Jefferson Street, Room 310**  
**Green Bay, WI 54301**

Members: Andy Nicholson, Chris Wery, Tom Diedrick and Pat Buckley

Members Excused: Tom Siebert

Members Absent: Tom De Wane

Others Present: Cheryl Renier-Wigg, Robyn Hallet, Dave Pietenpol, Noel Halvorsen, Rob Miller, Sue Mills

1. Call to order.

A. Nicholson called the BCHA Project Based Voucher Advisory Subcommittee meeting to order.

2. Opening Roll call.

Members Present: Andy Nicholson, Chris Wery, Tom Diedrick and Pat Buckley

3. Election of Officers.

A motion was made by C. Wery, seconded by P. Buckley to nominate A. Nicholson as Chair of this sub-committee. Motion carried.

4. Adoption of agenda.

A motion was made by C. Wery and seconded by P. Buckley to adopt the agenda. Motion carried.

5. Discussion and possible recommendation(s) to make to the Brown County Housing Authority regarding the impact of proposed changes to Chapter 17 of the BCHA Administrative Plan, regarding establishment and management of separate waiting lists for individual projects or buildings that receive Project Based Voucher assistance.

A motion was made by C. Wery, seconded by P. Buckley to open the floor for public comments. Motion carried.

A. Nicholson asked to hear the goals and plans. D. Pietenpol of Ecumenical Partnership for Housing (EPH) explained EPH's plan to the subcommittee. He explained to members what EPH is and the history of EPH. Their main goals are transitional housing and long-term housing. He stated they are finding that families that are ready to leave transitional housing cannot afford rent as rent in the Brown County area is extremely high. They would now like to apply for PBVs for some of these families. If the family qualifies for a PBV, it gives them the opportunity to work their way up to the full market rate. The reason they are requesting a separate waiting list is because their mission is working with families that are coming out of shelters or transitional housing. If they had PBVs that were available to the community in general and had to pull from that list, they would be digressing from why they exist and why they are a non-profit. They would

prefer to only pull families that are being referred from shelters or from transitional housing. He then went through who they serve, which included families making less than 50 percent of median income, must be employed, pass a criminal background check and no evictions due to destruction of property. This is a way for a family to move from homelessness to long-term or permanent self-sufficiency.

C. Renier-Wigg confirmed that the BCHA has already approved the PBV for EPH and that EPH is going to purchase new properties outside of the City of Green Bay. D. Pietsenpol stated that was correct. And now a change is needed to Chapter 17 of the Administrative Plan to allow for a separate waiting list to be created.

R. Miller asked D. Pietsenpol what their definition of a family is. D. Pietsenpol stated that it is a parent or grandparent with a minor child or a child under the age of 18 years. They have places throughout Green Bay and also outside of the City of Green Bay as well. These PBVs would be for outside of the City of Green Bay and will be purchasing properties. R. Miller stated their definition of a family may not be same as that of the City's ordinance. R. Hallet stated that the HUD definition of a family is very broad, as one person can be considered as a family for both the HCV and public housing programs. However, as far as the PBV, HUD does allow a waiting list to be created based on specific residency criteria. If an organization wanted to identify a specific population they would like to serve, it could be narrowed down for that specific waiting list. R. Miller expressed concern about discrimination based on the definition of a family. D. Pietsenpol stated they do not discriminate by sex; for example if there were two males and a child that is still considered a family. R. Hallet stated that the PBV program is an equal opportunity housing program and fair housing requirements are included in the RFP. EPH as well as any other PBV owners need to follow fair housing laws.

P. Buckley asked what would happen if a family, after placement, no longer have any income. D. Pietsenpol stated they have case managers who will be working with the families to encourage compliance; but, if a family stops working or refuses to work they will be evicted. However, they will first work with the family as long as they can and give them resources along the way. Families are given many changes before they would be evicted.

P. Buckley asked how many places they have now. D. Pietsenpol stated they have 20 transitional families today, and working with 11 long-term supportive housing families in which four families they are leasing through a local landlord and seven are through properties EPH owns. It was asked if they are tracking success/failure rate. EPH does track this information. R. Hallet stated that with PBV, there is no requirement for case management. However, EPH will be doing their own tracking. P. Buckley wanted to know how this will be monitored to make sure that the PBVs are being used as they should and it would be nice to hear feedback. D. Pietsenpol stated that he would be more than happy to report back to this committee or the BCHA on an annual basis. R. Hallet stated that they can start reporting on both the HCV and PBV programs.

T. Diedrick clarified with P. Buckley that his main concern is that monies are not being used properly. If the individual/family are not meeting the criteria established by EPH, they will be let go from the program. If they are let go, they are then out of the voucher system. P. Buckley stated that was correct and also wanted to know the success/failure rate of the program. T. Diedrick stated that you can't put criteria on one program and not on another.

C. Wery asked D. Pietsenpol if the program is already in place. D. Pietsenpol stated that this portion of the program has been running for about 4 to 5 years for the 11 locations. He then asked D. Pietsenpol how many families have they helped. D. Pietsenpol stated about 15 families.

He stated the reason this number is higher than the 11 is that they started out by working with local landlords. He stated that every family they have worked with has not returned to homelessness. They have had two families that have not done well with the program to date. One due to refusal to work and the other was drug related. They have a zero tolerance level for drug abuse. He then gave an example of a family that has gone through the program from homelessness to homeownership.

It was asked what the income limit is for the vouchers. R. Hallet stated it is up to 80 percent of the County median income, but clarified that when they get above 50 percent, they generally have sufficient income and they no longer qualify for a Housing Assistance Payment. A conversation continued regarding the voucher system and the increased amount of rent paid by families.

R. Miller asked what will happen if EPH sells the property. R. Hallet stated the contract will then end with EPH and they will lose the voucher. If the new owner wanted a PBV, they would have to go through the whole process with BCHA. R. Hallet stated that the intention of the PBV program is the deconcentrate poverty. She also stated that HUD limits how many vouchers a housing authority can project base, which caps out at the higher of 20 percent of the vouchers or 20 percent of the budget authority. She stated but the BCHA is at approximately 10 – 13 percent. These PBVs are taken out of the general HCV program and are not additional vouchers.

A. Nicholson asked if EPH has looked outside of Brown County. D. Pietsenpol stated that they consider themselves a Green Bay non-profit Organization and that their referrals come from the community. Furthermore, there are other agencies that work outside of the Brown County area like NEWCAP.

D. Pietsenpol added that when the Golden House refers a family into their long-term supportive housing, the case management comes along with the family. They will continue to have the same case manager throughout the program. A. Nicholson asked why they let the families stay as long as they want and why EPH wouldn't want to help the families get off the system on their own. D. Pietsenpol stated that if they are making over 50 percent of the median income, they generally no longer qualify for assistance. It is at that point they encourage them to either purchase a home or rent elsewhere so that EPH's home may be made available to another family.

R. Miller asked D. Pietsenpol if this is being done nationwide. D. Pietsenpol stated that he is not aware of any programs like this nationwide. R. Miller then asked about the idea that people purposely become homeless to get onto this waiting list. D. Pietsenpol stated that he has never heard of families become homeless intentionally. D. Pietsenpol reiterated that families cannot apply directly to them; they only take families that are referred from shelter or transitional housing. This then opens slots in those programs for other families.

C. Wery asked how many vouchers are available. R. Hallet stated that in Brown County there are 3,411 vouchers; however, they can only spend up to their budget authority which currently allows for a total of 2,936 tenant and project based vouchers. There are currently 333 project based vouchers. EPH has been approved for 4 but are looking for 12 in total after they purchase additional homes. R. Hallet gave a breakdown of the Project Based Vouchers in Brown County by owner. The 12 vouchers EPH is applying for will be located outside of Green Bay and BCHA must approve the location of the properties.

A conversation ensued between A. Nicholson and D. Pietenpol regarding transitional housing and the locations of EPHs current transitional housing. D. Pietenpol stated that there is such a demand for transitional housing and the area is having trouble keeping up with the requests. A. Nicholson asked if the families are from the area. D. Pietenpol stated yes, that 80 percent of the families are long-time residents of the Green Bay area. A. Nicholson questioned the number of "long-term residents" staying in the shelters.

R. Hallet explained that she has been gathering data regarding place of origin of local homeless residents. She shared data from the Brown County United Way indicating that the vast majority of homeless individuals and families report a Brown County zip code for their previous permanent address.

A. Nicholson stated that he has a hard time believing that a majority of the people are from Brown County, due to his past experience.

P. Buckley asked if all the PBV owners have the same criteria for accepting people into their program. R. Hallet stated that they can set specific resident criteria and if they don't set any then it would be based on the general HCV criteria.

R. Miller asked D. Pietenpol if the families are required to work with their case managers. D. Pietenpol stated that a HCV does not require case management; however, EPH has built case management as a requirement into their lease. This would mean they work with individuals to set goals and work to achieve those goals. R. Miller asked if they can be evicted for not achieving their goals. D. Pietenpol stated no. Eviction occurs when the family fails to stay financially viable just like anyone else in the community.

A motion was made by P. Buckley, seconded by C. Wery to close the floor and return to regular order of business. Motion carried.

A discussion ensued between Subcommittee members. Information included the criteria of the program. A. Nicholson again stated that due to his past experience, he doesn't believe the shelters are made up of long-term residents of Green Bay. He sees the purchasing of these properties as a disruption to neighborhoods, as the neighbors don't like change.

T. Diedrick then explained that his non-profit, Options for Independent Living, also had complaints from neighbors when their office building was in development, but that once people came over and learned what the organization does, they changed their mind completely. R. Miller stated that having the neighborhood talk to EPH may be helpful and help them to understand what they do.

C. Wery stated he would like to see specific criteria with these vouchers and if it is not followed, the vouchers can be pulled from EPH. C. Wery also stated that EPH should not be allowed to sell the properties or change management without having to come back to the BCHA and all properties will be located outside of the City of Green Bay.

R. Hallet then explained criteria for HCV program and stated that these criteria will also need to be met with PBVs.

It was suggested that Item #6 be discussed prior to voting on Item #5.

A motion was made by P. Buckley, seconded by T. Diedrick to open the floor for Item #6. Motion carried.

6. Comments from the Public:

- a. State name and address for the record.
- b. Comments will be limited to five minutes.
- c. The Committee's role is to listen to public comments, and not to ask questions.

R. Miller – 227 S. Van Buren Street – R. Miller reported on a magazine article regarding New York City policies contributing to homelessness in their City. Some of the incentives offered may induce people to become homeless so they can get access to the waiting lists.

Noel Halvorsen – 2443 Deckner Avenue – He stated that this program is not a program to serve homelessness, but a program to serve low income households seeking support to afford housing at market conditions with private landlords in the community. EPH is asking the Authority to consider an allowable “tweak” to the program administrative rules to help channel those coming out of homeless shelters. He does recommend the subcommittee move forward with this request.

A motion was made by P. Buckley, seconded by T. Diedrick to return to regular order of business. Motion carried.

A motion was made by P. Buckley, seconded by C. Wery to approve the proposed changes to Chapter 17 of the BCHA Administrative Plan, regarding establishment and management of separate waiting lists for individual projects or buildings that receive Project Based Voucher assistance based upon the above listed criteria. Motion carried.

A motion was made by P. Buckley, seconded by C. Wery to receive and place on file the comments from the public. (Nay: T. Diedrick) Motion carried.

7. Such other matters as are authorized by law.

A motion was made by T. Diedrick, seconded by P. Buckley to receive and place on file other matters as are authorized by law. Motion carried.

8. Set date/Time/Place for next meeting (if applicable).

No additional meetings needed.

A motion was made by P. Buckley, seconded by T. Diedrick to receive and place on file the date of the next meeting. Motion carried.

9. Closing Roll Call.

Present: Andy Nicholson, Chris Wery, Tom Diedrick, and Pat Buckley

10. Adjournment.

A motion was made by P. Buckley, seconded by C. Wery to adjourn. Motion carried.

JD: RAH